

Message Text

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ACTION ACDA-19

INFO OCT-01 EUR-25 ISO-00 ACDE-00 SSO-00 NSCE-00 USIE-00

INRE-00 CIAE-00 PM-07 H-03 INR-10 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-07

PA-04 RSC-01 PRS-01 SPC-03 SS-20 IO-14 OIC-04 OMB-01

AEC-11 AECE-00 SAM-01 NEA-10 TRSE-00 SAJ-01 DRC-01

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O 191529Z MAR 74

FM AMEMBASSY VIENNA

TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 2069

SECDEF WASHDC IMMEDIATE

INFO USMISSION NATO PRIORITY

AMEMBASSY BONN PRIORITY

USNMR SHAPE PRIORITY

USCINCEUR PRIORITY

S E C R E T VIENNA 2450

FROM US REP MBFR

E. O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PARM, NATO

SUBJECT: MBFR: INFORMAL SESSION WITH EASTERN REPS MARCH 18, 1974

1. BEGIN SUMMARY: IN THREE AND ONE-HALF HOUR INFORMAL SESSION MARCH 18, ALLIES WERE REPRESENTED BY BELGIAN REP, UK REP AND US REP, AND EAST BY SOVIET REP SMIRNOVSKY (KHLESTOV WAS EXCUSED AS ILL), POLISH REP STRULAK AND CZECHOSLOVAK REP KLEIN. SESSION WAS CONTINUED STAD-OFF, WITH FEW NEW ARGUMENTS ON EITHER SIDE. EASTERN REPS STRESSED THAT ANY TROOP REDUCTION AGREEMENT WAS POSSIBLE ONLY IF WEST WAS WILLING TO TAKE INTO ACCOUNT EASTERN INTEREST IN REDUCTION OF AIR AND NUCLEAR FORCES. ALLIED REPS AGAIN SUCCEEDED IN REPEATEDLY BRINGING DISCUSSION BACK TO THE POINT THAT WAR IN CENTRAL EUROPE COULD BEST BE AVOIDED THROUGH CORRECTING IMBALANCES IN GROUND FORCES; ONLY

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AT END DID SMIRNOVSKY OBJECT THAT THIS WAS THEORY OF SOVIET

AGGRESSION.

2. EASTERN REPS AGAIN MAINLY EMPHASIZED POLITICAL AND PSYCHOLOGICAL FACTORS IN ARGUING FOR AIR AND ESPECIALLY NUCLEAR REDUCTIONS. EASTERN PUBLIC OPINION SIMPLY WOULD NOT UNDERSTAND IT IF THESE FEARED WEAPONS WERE OMITTED FROM REDUCTIONS. WESTERN REPS FOCUSES ON MORE PRACTICAL MILITARY ASPECTS AND EASTERN REPS AVOIDED ANSWERING A NUMBER OF SPECIFIC QUESTIONS IN THIS AREA. DESPITE FACT THAT WESTERN REPS CONTINUED TO MAINTAIN WHOLLY NEGATIVE POSITION WITHOUT ANY DEVIATION FOR THIRD SESSION IN A ROW, EASTERN REPS CONTINUED PATIENT AND RESTRAINED IN THEIR RESPONSE.

3. AMONG RELATIVELY FEW SPECIFIC NEW POINTS RAISED BY EAST WAS THAT, DESPITE DIFFICULTY OF COMPARING DIFFERENT TYPES OF EQUIPMENT, INCLUDING AIRCRAFT, SYMBOLIC REDUCTION WOULD BE EASIER BECAUSE IT COULD FOCUS ON A FEW TYPES WHERE COMPARABILITY WAS GREATEST. EASTERN REPS CLAIMED THERE HAD BEEN 10,000 MAN INCREASE IN WESTERN AIR FORCE MANPOWER DURING 1973, AND THAT 50 PERCENT OF WESTERN AIRCRAFT WERE CONFIGURED TO DELIVER NUCLEAR WEAPONS. THEY POINTED OUT AS ARGUMENT FOR REDUCTING AIR FORCE THAT FRG AIR FORCE PERSONNEL MANNED PERSHING. THEY ASKED WHETHER WESTERN REFUSAL TO INCLUDE NUCLEAR AND AIR WEAPONS CARRIED OVER TO SECOND PHASE OF NEGOTIATIONS. MAJOR SPECIFIC EASTERN JUSTIFICATION FOR SYMBOLIC REDUCTION APPROACH AS APPLIED TO NUCLEAR WEAPONS WAS THAT IT WOULD FREEZE FURTHER EXPANSION. SMIRNOVSKY TWICE REFERRED TO SYMBOLIC REDUCTION PROPOSAL AS A POSSIBLE SEPARATE AGREEMENT, TO BE IMPLEMENTED DURING FURTHER NEGOTIATION ON REDUCTIONS, THUS BOLSTERING ALLIED CONTENTION THAT EAST ACCEPTS PHASE NEGOTIATION IN PRINCIPLE. ALLIED REPS POINTED OUT WEAKNESSES OF EASTERN METHOD OF CALCULATING REDUCTIONS AND LOGICAL FALLACY OF SYMBOLIC REDUCTION OF NUCLEAR WEAPONS, WHICH WOULD NOT REDUCT THE DANGER OF WAR.

4. ALLIEDREPS MAKE CLEAR AT BEGINNING OF SESSION THAT THEY INTENDED TO RAISE US-SOVIET REDUCTIONS AND ALSO STABILIZING MEASURES IN FORTHCOMING SEVENTH SESSION. SMIRNOVSKY APPEARED TO ACCEPT THIS POINT AND RAISED NO PROCEDURAL OBJECTION TO DISCUSSION OF STABILIZING MEASURES. AT END OF SESSION, SMIRNOVSKY REQUESTED THAT NEXT SESSION BE HELD ON MARCH 25 INSTEAD OF MARCH 21 IN

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ORDER TO GIVE EAST LONGER TIME TO PREPARE AND BACAUSE OF KHLESTOV'S ILLNESS. ALLIED REPS SAID THEY WOULD PREFER SESSION ON MARCH 21, BUT THAT THEY COULD ACCEPT SEVENTH SESSION OF SERIES ON MARCH 25 IF KHLESTOV STILL INDISPOSED. ALLIED REPS NOTED THAT THEY WOULD RAISE US-SOVIET FORCES AND STABILIZING MEASURES IN SEVENTH SESSION. SMIRNOVSKY MERELY ACKNOWLEDGED THIS AND DID NOT COMMENT FURTHER. SMIRNOVSKY SAID THAT, FOR HIS PART IN SEVENTH SESSION, HE WOULD TRY TO SUMMARIZE SERIES OF DISCUSSIONS

AND PERHAPS RAISE SOME FURTHER QUESTIONS. END SUMMARY.

REMAINDER OF REPORT FOLLOWS SEPTTEL. TRINKA

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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
Capture Date: 01 JAN 1994
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: ARMED FORCES, DMZ, FOREIGN POLICY POSITION, MUTUAL FORCE REDUCTIONS, NUCLEAR WEAPONS, MEETINGS
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 19 MAR 1974
Decaption Date: 01 JAN 1960
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Authority: golinofr
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 28 MAY 2004
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1974VIENNA02450
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: GS
Errors: N/A
Film Number: n/a
From: VIENNA
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1974/newtext/t19740331/aaaabcwa.tel
Line Count: 118
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE
Office: ACTION ACDA
Original Classification: SECRET
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 3
Previous Channel Indicators:
Previous Classification: SECRET
Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Reference: n/a
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Authority: golinofr
Review Comment: n/a
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 25 MAR 2002
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review History: RELEASED <25 MAR 2002 by kelleyw0>; APPROVED <06 MAY 2002 by golinofr>
Review Markings:

Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
30 JUN 2005

Review Media Identifier:
Review Referrals: n/a
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: MBFR: INFORMAL SESSION WITH EASTERN REPS MARCH 18, 1974
TAGS: PARM, UR, US, NATO
To: STATE DOD
Type: TE
Markings: Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 30 JUN 2005